

Our Lady of Pity Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105083
Local Authority	Wirral
Inspection number	324153
Inspection date	10 December 2008
Reporting inspector	Paul Bamber

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	418
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Father Lester
Headteacher	Mr M Cotton
Date of previous school inspection	3 October 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Rigby Drive Greasby Wirral Merseyside CH49 1RE
Telephone number	0151 677 6262
Fax number	0151 677 5609

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the quality and standards in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS); the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of the support provided for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in mathematics; and the degree to which adequate improvements have been made to the curriculum and to aspects of governance since the school was last inspected.

Evidence was gathered from: the school's judgements about attainment on entry to Reception; test results and the self-evaluation form (SEF); nationally published assessment data; the school's own assessment records; relevant policies; observations of the school at work, including visits to lessons; and, analysis of parents' questionnaires. Discussions were also held with the headteacher, assistant headteachers, staff, governors and pupils. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in the SEF, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

Many of the pupils who attend this larger than average school, come from relatively advantaged backgrounds. They are predominantly of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is around average. A much lower percentage than normal is entitled to a free school meal. The school is on a split site, with one of the two Reception classes housed in a separate annex three miles from the main school. This class, together with the Reception class in the main building, makes up the school's Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision. The school has the Healthy School Award.

There is pre-school provision on both sites managed by a private provider, which did not form part of this inspection.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school, which provides excellent value for money. Pupils behave exceptionally well and have a keen sense of right and wrong. Their attitudes to learning are extremely positive because they have an exciting curriculum and are taught so well. Pupils feel valued and well cared for, quoting, 'how friendly everyone is and how much fun they have in school'. The high quality of the support and guidance they receive, both personally and academically, contributes very significantly to their excellent achievements. Very effective leaders and managers ensure that the school runs smoothly, that high standards are maintained and that pupils receive an excellent all round education that prepares them very well for their future schooling and for their life beyond.

Pupils make outstanding progress through the school. They enter Reception with above average skills for their age and, as a result of the overall excellent progress they make, leave Year 6 with exceptionally high standards. It is testament to the effectiveness of leadership and management that a relative weakness that emerged in mathematics, over the last two years in Key Stage 1 and to a lesser extent in Key Stage 2, has been very successfully addressed. This has resulted in achievement in mathematics for all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, now being excellent. In the 2008 provisional Year 6 national test results, nearly all Year 6 pupils reached the expected Level 4 and over four fifths attained the higher Level 5 in all three subjects. Pupils' musical and artistic skills are also well above expectations as a result of very effective teaching and the high priority given to the arts within the outstanding curriculum.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and their above average attendance reflects their keenness to do well and to take advantage of the many, varied opportunities provided for them. They take great pride in presenting their work to the best of their ability and work independently in a mature and competent way. For example, the biographies Year 6 pupils have compiled about local high profile figures, past and present, are varied in choice and reflect their excellent ability to research, using information and communication technology (ICT) and interviews, and by interrogating historical texts. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. They have a keen sense of the wonder of nature and are determined to protect the environment. They develop very strong relationships based on shared moral values but also acknowledge and value the diversity of cultures prevalent in the UK and around the world. The visit made by pupils to a local high school greatly enhanced their understanding of global issues and of citizenship, reinforcing the school's excellent contribution to community cohesion. Members of the school council represent the views and concerns of their classmates very successfully. They also strongly advocate the benefits of a healthy diet and plenty of physical exercise.

Teaching is exciting, well focused and promotes very high standards and excellent achievement. Pupils respond extremely positively to frequent opportunities to learn actively, for instance, through role play and drama. All staff have fully embraced the recent changes to the curriculum and they work very tightly as a team, with particularly good liaison between class teachers and teaching assistants. The latter play a significant part in ensuring that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make excellent progress. All pupils enjoy a rich curriculum, which promotes their basic skills, personal development and aesthetic appreciation extremely well. The frequent and absorbing visits pupils make grip their interest, add greatly to their experiences, and act as a prompt for their fluent writing, vibrant art and design work and excellent projects. There is overall good provision in EYFS with some outstanding practice. However, there are

some limitations in the degree of stimulation provided by the learning environment, especially as regards outdoor provision.

The headteacher provides a clear, strong direction for the school and is very ably supported by his senior management team in the successful drive to maintain and improve the high standards already achieved. Rigorous systems to check on pupils' progress and to identify any emerging underachievement or relative weaknesses in provision are very effective in bringing about swift action leading to good improvement. Apt professional development has contributed very well to excellent teaching and to many improvements in the curriculum. Leaders and managers ensure that all statutory requirements are fully met as regards child protection and vetting adults who work with pupils. The very strong partnerships the school has forged with external agencies and with the local secondary school in particular, have contributed extremely well to the excellent provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for those who have special gifts or talents. The vast majority of parents think very highly of the school, particularly praising, 'The excellent all round education.' their children receive. There has been excellent improvement since the last inspection, not least in how effective governors have become in supporting the school and in challenging its performance. The school's record in maintaining high standards and outstanding achievement and its continual improvement indicates an excellent capacity to improve even further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the Reception classes with knowledge and skills above those expected for their age. They achieve well and by the end of the Reception their attainment is well above average in all areas of learning. Teaching and learning are good. Specific teaching sessions aimed to improve children's literacy skills, for example, blending letters to make words, are highly successful and underpin children's excellent start in reading. Children's learning is carefully assessed and recorded to check their progress and plan the next steps in learning. They benefit from a good balance of activities led by adults and those they choose for themselves. Children are interested and enterprising in their structured play. They concentrate extremely well, for example, when using computers to sharpen their numeracy skills, and they play imaginatively with construction equipment to build complex models. However, their creative and physical development is limited by the restricted access to outdoor provision and the space within the indoor environment is not always used to the full to encourage them to explore and learn for themselves. The care, guidance and support provided for children are exemplary. Strong relationships with parents ensure that information is frequently exchanged to ensure that children are safeguarded and supported in their learning and development. The home-school communication notebook provides an excellent example of informing parents about, and securing their involvement in, children's learning. Children's personal development is outstanding. They are cooperative, patient and persevering and their behaviour is exemplary. The good provision made for children in the Reception classes is attributable to the good leadership and management. The EYFS leader has an excellent grasp of what constitutes good practice and makes frequent visits to check on the impact of teaching and learning in the Reception classes. There is a shared urgency and a strong commitment to improve outdoor provision.

What the school should do to improve further

- In the Reception classes, make children's learning even more stimulating, especially outdoors.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

¹Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Inspection of Our Lady of Pity Catholic Primary School, Wirral, CH49 1RE

On behalf of the other inspector and myself I would like to thank you very much for the lovely welcome we received when we inspected your school recently. Yours is an outstanding school that gives you an excellent all round education.

The things we were most impressed with were your excellent behaviour, how well you get on together and the quality of your work. You make super progress through the school because your teachers make sure that you have just the right level of work and that you are very well looked after and supported. Your lessons are packed with exciting things to learn and you have lots of opportunities to practise your speaking and writing skills, both of which are extremely good. You told me how much you enjoyed the visits you go on. It was clear from how much Year 2 pupils wrote about their visit to the 'learning lighthouse,' that they had learnt a lot about science and ICT.

Your headteacher and the other adults who help to run the school so well are always looking for ways in which they can improve your standards and to make your time in school even more enjoyable. There are very few things that I feel the school could be doing better, but I have asked your headteacher and the governors to make learning for the Reception children even more interesting and to give them more opportunities to work and play outside.

Thank you again for your welcome and talking to me so openly.